

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 171601Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 0396

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EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652:HGDS
TAGS:HPFOR AO ZA US SF
SUBJECT:HSTATE HOUSE BRANDS AS "COMPLETELY UNTRUE" AFP PRESS
REPORT ON ZAMBIAN RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA IN
ANGOLAN WAR

1. TWO DAYS AFTER HIS RETURN FROM WASHINGTON. MARK
CHONA,HSPECIAL ASSISTANT TO PRESIDENT KAUNDA, PHONED ME
FEB 17 IN VERY AGITATED STATE,HCOMPLAINING ABOUT "EXTREMELY
DAMAGING" AFP PRESS REPORT DATELINED JOHANNESBURG FEB 16
WHICH HE SAID FALSELY PORTRAYED KAUNDA AS GO-BETWEEN WITH
SOUTH AFRICA ON BEHALF OF JONAS SAVIMBI CONCERNING INVOLVEMENT
OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS IN ANGOLAN WAR (SEPTTEL).

2. AFP PRESS RELEASE IS REPORTEDLY BASED ON A RATHER
CONFUSING REPORT OF A RECORD COMPILED "BY US SENATOR BILL
COUGHLIN"HBASED ON HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH UNITA'S SAVIMBI
AND PURPORTEDLY RELEASED BY SAVIMBI TO PRESS IN SOUTH AFRICA.
CHONA DENOUNCED AFP STORY AS COMPLETELY UNTRUE AND
ACCUSED SENATOR TUNNEY'S STAFFER BILL COUGHLIN WITH
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UNWARRANTED AND MISLEADING LEAKS TO PRESS.HCHONA

POINTED OUT MOST OFFENDING AND DAMAGING FALSEHOODS
IN AFP RELEASE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) AT NO STAGE HAD SOUTH AFRICA TAKEN MILITARY
ACTION WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF ZAIRE, HZAMBIA AND
THE IVORY COAST.

(B) HCOUGHLIN REPORT, TO BE PRESENTED BEFORE US SENATE'S
AFRICA COMMITTEE THIS WEEK, HSAID DR. SAVIMBI HAD
TWICE VISITED SOUTH AFRICA IN PAST TWO MONTHS IN A
BID TO SECURE MILITARY AID, AFTER MEETINGS HE HAD
WITH TOP SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS AND PREMIER JOHN
VORSTER WERE ARRANGED WITH THE HELP OF ZAMBIAN
PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA.

(C) AFTER DR. SAVIMBI'S VISIT TO ZAIRE IN SEPTEMBER TO
ASK HELP FROM PRESIDENT MOBUTU SESE SEKO WHO GAVE
HIM ELEVEN MANNED TANKS, PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA OF
ZAMBIA ARRANGED A MEETING FOR SAVIMBI WITH PREMIER
VORSTER IN PRETORIA ON DEC 20. HSHORTLY
AFTERWARDS, ON CHRISTMAS DAY, THE SOUTH AFRICAN
COMMANDER TOLD DR. HSAVIMBI HIS TROOPS WERE PULLING
OUT OF ANGOLA FOR GOOD. DR. SAVIMBI THEN WENT BACK
TO LUSAKA AND REQUESTED ANOTHER MEETING WITH SOUTH
AFRICAN AUTHORITIES, HTHIS TIME IN NAMIBIA.

3. CHONA SAID EACH ONE OF THESE STATEMENTS WAS COMPLETELY
FALSE. HALTHOUGH AFP PRESS REPORT SEEMINGLY CREDITS
SAVIMBI WITH RELEASE OF COUGHLIN'S REPORT TO SOUTH
AFRICAN PRESS, CHONA MADE NO COMMENT ON SAVIMBI, HRATHER
RESERVED ALL OF HIS CRITICISM FOR COUGHLIN WHOM HE HAS
COME TO DISTRUST. SAID THIS NOT THE FIRST EVIDENCE OF
COUGHLIN'S UNRELIABILITY. HWHEN CHONA WAS IN WASHINGTON
HE HAD MEETING WITH SENATOR TUNNEY DURING WHICH COUGHLIN
ASKED HIM HOW MUCH ECONOMIC AID AND ARMS ZAMBIA WAS SEEKING
FROM US. CHONA SAID HE CLARIFIED THAT HIS MISSION WAS ONE
OF PEACE, NOT AID. CHONA NOTED THAT COUGHLIN LEFT MEETING
BEFORE IT WAS OVER AND HE SUSPECTED COUGHLIN WAS SOURCE OF
MISLEADING REUTERS STORY WHICH APPEARED IN ZAMBIA DAILY
MAIL (LUSAKA 360) HAS CHONA HAD NOT RPT NOT GIVEN INTERVIEW
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(STATE 37519).

4. CHONA THEN MADE SLIGHTEST SUGGESTION THAT SOUTH AFRICANS
(FOURIE?) MAY HAVE BROKEN CONFIDENCE OF THEIR SECRET MEETING
WIH KAUNDA IN DECEMBER AND COUGHLIN MAY HAVE GARBLED FACT
TO ZAMBIA'S DISADVANTAGE AND NOW ACUTE EMBARRASSMENT. IF
TIME HAS COME TO BREAK CONFIDENCE, CHONA SAID, ZAMBIA CAN
ALSO PLAY THE GAME, BUT AS MATTER OF MORAL PRINCIPLE, KAUNDA

PREFERS NOT RPT NOT TO. CHONA REMINDED ME THAT WHEN SOUTH AFRICANS WERE IN ZAMBIA IN DECEMBER KAUNDA HAD ASKED THEM TO GET OUT OF WAR (LUSAKA 2513).

5. CHONA CONCLUDED BY REQUESTING ME TO ADVISE WASHINGTON AND PRETORIA OF THE UNTRUTH OF THESE "EXTREMELY HURTFUL" ALLEGATIONS IN HOPES DEPT COULD SET RECORD STRAIGHT WITH SENATOR TUNNEY AND HIS STAFF AND SEEK A DENIAL FROM THEM OF FALSE AND OFFENDING ALLEGATIONS IN AFP RELEASE LEST THEY BE REPEATED IN COUGHLIN'S REPORT TO SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE THIS WEEK. FINALLY, CHONA ASKED THAT US REPS IN SOUTH AFRICA SET RECORD STRAIGHT WITH RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS OF SAG.

6. COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION: WOULD HOPE DEPT COULD CALL CHONA'S REACTION TO ATTENTION OF SENATOR TUNNEY, POINTING OUT IN STRICT CONFIDENCE THAT ANY REFERENCES BY US CONGRESSIONAL STAFF ASSISTANT TO WHATEVER CONVERSATIONS PRESIDENT KAUNDA MAY HAVE HAD WITH SOUTH AFRICANS ARE CONSIDERED HIGHLY PRIVILEGED INFORMATION, WERE NOT THE SUBJECT OF COUGHLIN'S CONVERSATIONS WITH CHONA HERE AND COULD BE DAMAGING NOT ONLY TO US-ZAMBIAN RELATIONS BUT TO CAUSE OF DETENTE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.
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